

NEWS RELEASE

**FROM: Catherine L. Hanaway
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FESTUS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS

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A Festus, Missouri man pled guilty today to charges of unlawful possession of firearms, announced United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway.

RUSSELL EUGENE LEE, age 37, pled guilty to one felony count of being a previously convicted felon in possession of firearms. He appeared before United States District Judge Jean C. Hamilton.

On October 28, 2006, Marvin Stephens contacted the Carter County Sheriff's office and reported the theft of several firearms from his house near Ellsinore, Missouri. Mr. Stephens suspected that Russell Eugene Lee, a house-guest of Mr. Stephens for a month prior to the theft, had taken the firearms. The officers interviewed a witness who stated that she saw Mr. Lee take a large bag that had some items in it from Mr. Stephens' bedroom. Mr. Stephens reported that Mr. Lee did

not have any property in Mr. Stephens' bedroom and that the firearms were originally located in that bedroom.

Russell Lee went to his wife's residence in Festus, Missouri, and asked her to contact the police and report that he had taken the firearms from Mr. Stephens' house. She made this report and told the officers where to find the firearms. Mr. Lee was arrested and gave a statement that he had taken several firearms from Mr. Stephens' home. All of the firearms that were taken from Mr. Stephens' residence were recovered. Due to Mr. Lee's previous felony conviction, he is prohibited from possessing firearms.

Mr. Lee now faces a maximum punishment of ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing has been set for November 26, 2007.

Hanaway praised the Carter County Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for their work on the case. Assistant United States Attorney Keith D. Sorrell handled the prosecution for the Government.